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ABSTRACT

The application of an approach to language and language learning to the design of an eight-week summer course in English for Saudi Arabian students is described. Given at the Institute of English Language Education in Lancaster, England, the course consisted of three introductory mini-units, each providing one day's material, and six main units, each of which occupied a week. The view of language and language learning on which the course was based is discussed as well as cognitive and affective processes that influence learning. The overall course plan is outlined and the major components of a teaching unit are described. Sample materials, exercises, and teaching notes are included. (Author/AMH)

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Institute for English Language Education
University of Lancaster

A STUDENT-CENTRED APPROACH TO LEARNING ENGLISH

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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(with a postscript by Alan Waters)

Lancaster, 1978

Abstract

The authors describe the application of an approach to language and language learning in the designing of an 8-week summer course for Saudi Arabian students studying in the Institute for English Language Education, University of Lancaster. The overall course plan is outlined and the major components of a teaching unit described and illustrated with sample materials, exercises and teaching notes.

A postscript discusses issues raised in the implementation of the course.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This project was designed for a specific group of students in a specific learning situation, with specified aims. Within these parameters, however, we were left free to design a course in accordance with our view on language and language learning. The project consists of a detailed statement of these views, a description of the goals we set up for the syllabus, and the overall framework of the course within which those goals would be achieved. The course itself consists of three introductory mini-units, each providing one day's material, and six main units, each of which occupies a whole week. This project describes and illustrates with sample teaching materials one of the introductory mini-units and one of the main units.

The students for which the course was intended were Saudi Arabian students from the University of Riyad, who had just completed the third of a four year BA degree course. Seventeen of the students were from the Faculty of Arts, specialising in English, and 44 were from the Faculty of Education. They were attending the Institute for English Language Education of the University of Lancaster on an eight-week course, which had two main components. The first consisted of a mandatory component with a detailed syllabus provided by the University of Riyad covering various literary topics and areas of grammatical structure, and the second was the course as outlined in this project. The aims for this second component were also specified by the University, but were interpreted by us in the light of the theoretical background we set out and the course design we drew up. The first component took up six teaching hours per week and the component represented by this project took up to 14 hours per week.

The students had had a school background of teacher-controlled teaching with a rigid control of input and a uniform learning rate. In their school syllabus, language was regarded as a structural network representing language usage, but not language use. All the learning tasks they encountered were language-centred in that they had no validity other than practising language form, and were not geared to their own interests, aptitudes or abilities. We saw the Lancaster component as an opportunity to develop skill in language use, to develop individual interests through language, and to stimulate language through learning tasks that we hoped would be interesting from a cognitive and

an educational point of view. These tasks were to operate at various levels, to accommodate varying rates of learning and a range of interests and competence. There was to be no concentration on formal language for its own sake, but only when their knowledge of grammatical structures failed them in their communicative task. We would provide only a minimal amount of overt teaching, instead fostering an individual approach so that the students guided themselves into areas they were interested in or language skills they felt they needed to improve. However, the students would be closely monitored by tutors so that there would be constant feedback on their progress and weaker students could be guided into practice material of the relevant standard.

The main focus would be on skills rather than on discrete structural items or a list of 'notions' or 'functions', as we felt that in only eight weeks of teaching it would be difficult to determine their needs and requirements in terms of such categories. We use the word skills in the traditional sense of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, with a realisation that there is a great deal of inevitable overlap and that these skills do not exist as isolable entitles. The realisation of these skills would be determined according to different themes, and as far as possible graded in terms of both task and language difficulty. The tasks that the students undertook would to a large extent be determined individually according to the students' interests, but also with tutors' guidance into areas of linguistic weakness in a formal sense. Assessment would be a continual process with tutors checking all tasks, but there would be a formal examination at the end of the course to satisfy the requirements of the University of Riyad.

2. VIEW OF LANGUAGE

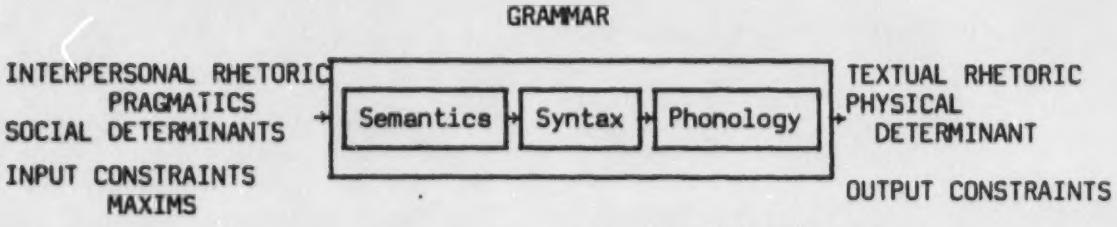
Introduction

An important factor in any course design is the theoretical view of language which forms the basis for making decisions on materials design, the learning environment, and evaluation techniques. Although no direct link between theory and practice can be made, a general framework can be provided, as Roulet states in the following quotation:

> "Linguistic theory provides the teacher with information on the structure and functioning of the language system in general which may play a role in the way he defines the goals, content and presentation of his teaching course."
>
> (Roulet, 1975, p. 67)

Theoretical Framework

It seems to us in designing this course that the most tenable and useful synthesis of all the inputs into linguistic theory is the system set up by Leech and outlined in the following diagram:



(Leech, 1977)

This summary, which attempts to explain language as a phenomenon involving more than just a linguistic code, offers us a view of language as a multidimensional system, and points out the fact that content and meaning are central to a concept of language. Because of this, language becomes a question of communication where "possessing a language as an instrument of communication is not simply a matter of being capable of constructing and understanding grammatical sentences. It is also a question of knowing how to use these sentences in given linguistic and non-linguistic contexts" (Roulet, 1976, p. 73).

Our view of language is essentially a descriptive rather than a prescriptive one, leading to an evaluation of the communicative

success of an utterance where the question of formal correctness is not of primary importance (but is considered). We are more concerned with the individual 'getting the message across' and being a successful participant (either on the productive or receptive side) of extended discourse.

We have, therefore, designed learning tasks based on extended texts and dialogues, or tasks involving the students in problem solving which requires language appropriate to the task. At the same time, we see competence in the basic skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking as a necessary foundation.

3. VIEW OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

3.1. Introduction

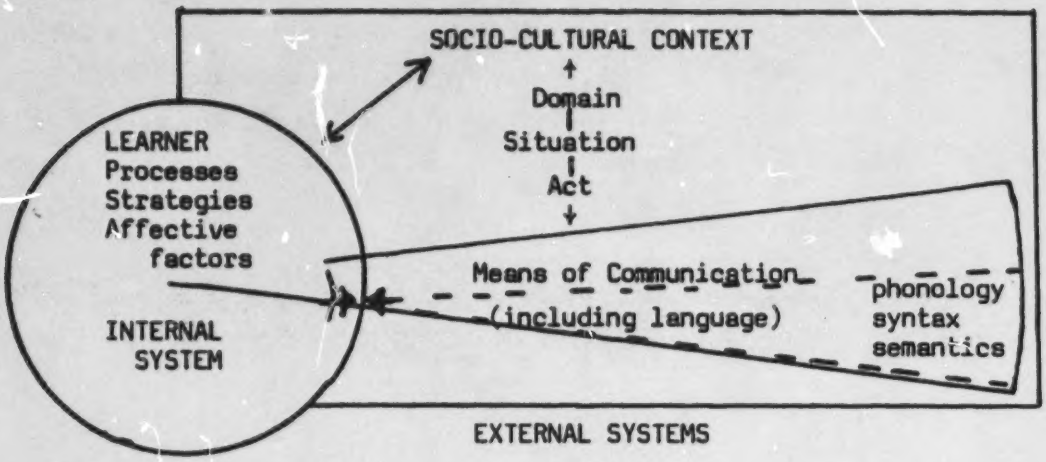
Our view of language learning has been the most influential factor in determining the final shape of materials and organization because this seems to us to be the area where research and theory provide the most direct guidance. In addition, the linguistic factor outlined above does not seem a very significant element of language learning:

> "The learner's ultimate success in acquiring the language will have little or no relationship with the exact nature of the language itself ... The actual learning will be subject to 'deeper' or more pervasive factors which are strictly non-linguistic."
>
> (Breen, 1977)

The communicative nature of language requires that our view of language learning incorporate a number of strands representing different perspectives on the significant processes of learning. These inputs into learning theory are represented by:

- the view from psycholinguistics (mental considerations)
- the view from sociolinguistics (social considerations)
- the view from applied linguistics (pedagogic considerations)

All of these strands are inter-related and might best be summarised by the diagram below:



(Breen, 1976)

3.2. Learning Processes

Beginning with the psychological aspects of learning we find that although there is some disagreement as to what accounts for successful learning, there are certain factors which do seem clear. At the process level it is now understood that learning is a developmental process involving a series of stages. A range of abilities from stimulus-response type behaviour to cognitive development are utilized by the learner (Gagné, 1975; Ingram, 1975), and knowing a language involves the following abilities:

- generative
- intuitive
- interpersonal
- propositional
- ideational (Candlin, 1976)

By including all these processes in our view of language we have had to develop a variety of learning tasks ranging from manipulative skills to skills of performing in group activities. In order to find out where the learners are weak or strong in the above areas we have constructed the type of exercises where the possibility of making errors is high, so that the errors can be used as the basis for feedback (see below, 3.4.)

3.3. Learning Strategies

A second facet of the psychological aspect of learning is the role various learning strategies play and the way in which these strategies vary considerably between individuals. The strategies can be grouped into certain categories as follows:

- the ways of learning
- the rate of learning
- the context of learning
- the organization of learning

3.3.1. Ways of Learning

Within the category of 'ways of learning' there are a number of strategies. To begin with, it appears as if there should be a balance between imitation and production (Ingram, 1975) of language items. There should also be a balance between productive (writing, speaking) and receptive (reading, listening) skills practice. In both these areas we believe that the learning individual is actively involved, so exercises have been designed which try to make reading and listening as active as pssible. The semantic view of language we have adopted allows for us to expose the students to more difficult and a wider variety of language forms than he is capable of producing (Wilkins 1976).

Another strategy in this category centres around inductive and deductive learning, both of which are used by learners. It seems, however, that a 'discovery approach' leads to a greater 'depth' of learning (Ingram, 1975). We have tried to account for both approaches, but with the majority of exercises based on the 'discovery' approach.

The mode (or channel) of communication seems to be a significant additional factor influencing learning strategies. Different students prefer different modes and are more successful in learning if allowed to focus on the preferred mode (Candlin, 1977). As a result of this hypothesis, our materials are multi-media, with written texts (reading passages, pictures and charts), sound tapes, slides, movies and video tapes. Each student will be able to select from this range within a particular Theme. While including all these types of media we have tried to remain 'true' to the media and not transpose texts from one medium to another.

3.3.2. Rates of Learning

The rates at which individuals learn varies a great deal and is related to the timing, spacing, and pacing of learning tasks (Stevick, 1976). The timing of new input is crucial to the memorization process and some individuals need only a short time between the presentation of information while others require a greater time period. This has implications for the speed with which students can go through drills and exercises. The spacing of chunks of information seems also to be important. An approach which includes distributed practice over a period of time and which is in some way cyclical appears to be superior (research noted in Stevick, 1976). Recall of information by learners is highest when they are allowed to move through materials at their own rate (Disick, 1975). We have tried to take these factors into account by allowing the students to control the speed of their progress within fairly broad limits.

3.3.3. Context of Learning

The third grouping of learning strategies, the context of learning, is discussed here only in relation to the classroom. A key element is the fact that meaning is an essential prerequisite of learning:

> "In a language-learning situation, Diller has demonstrated that sentences are easier to learn if the student meets them in a meaningful context. One reason for this may be that the meaningful context permits more complex processing." (Stevick, 1976)

We have tried to produce an organization of materials where the language is presented in meaningful contexts by using extended texts rather than individual sentences, and by exploiting these texts with activities which require the student to analyze, make inferences, and summarize. We have also included small group and large group sessions where language is used to complete tasks. This seems to us to be one way of providing a meaningful context within the constraints of the classroom.

The context of learning also affects learning strategies in that the language must be presented in a variety of interpersonal groupings. At one level the student is alone with the materials, but there are activities at the levels of student-teacher, student-student, and student-group. All these relationships are important in the view of

language seen as an aspect of communication. We have arranged the exercises so that all the above types of groupings are included.

3.3.4. Organization of Learning

The fourth category of learning strategies, the organization of learning, has perhaps been the most crucial area influencing our final design. The complexity and inter-relatedness of the strategies previously discussed are such that any attempt to structure a hierarchy and order of learning from a teacher's point of view is bound to be on a dubious theoretical base. We have, therefore, rejected that there is any 'sure' way of organizing the linguistic materials. Grammatical structure sequencing, situational groupings, and the functional/notional approach to course design did not appeal to us given the parameters of the course, so no clues to sequencing were to be found in these areas. In our abandonment of any theoretical base for determination of what aspects of the language should be learned in what order, we look to Jakobovitz and Gordon for justification:

> "This (sequential) hypothesis has become so ingrained in the very conception of language teaching that it is seldom remembered that this is a hypothesis rather than a self-evident truth."
>
> (Jakobovitz and Gordon, 1974, p. 30)

This does not mean that we have rejected any structure in our course. We have started with a fairly general overall framework, and within this we believe that the best way to handle the sequencing problem is to let the student himself decide on the order and complexity of his learning tasks with some tutorial direction to guide him towards the area that needs the most work (Schinnerer, 1977).

There is some theoretical support for our view as summarized by Disick (1975) in her discussion of the work of Carl Rogers and Maslow in their 'whole person' approach to learning in which the self-initiation and self-evaluation leading to self-direction are of considerable importance.

3.4. Feedback

Linked closely with the concept of strategies of learning is the role that feedback plays in these processes. We feel that our individualized approach with the student making decisions on the

direction of his learning requires that there is a great deal of communication between the student and the tutor (and between the students themselves). The aim of the feedback is to provide direction. As the 'negative criteria' for giving feedback seem to be the most effective (Clark, 1975), we had to make some decisions regarding the nature of errors. We had to be somewhat vague due to the fact that when any unit above the sentence is considered, the systems for classification of error-type are sketchy. However, as we wished to concentrate on those errors which were causing the most serious problems in communication, it seemed that the system established by Burt and Kiparsky (1974) would be the most useful. The division into global and local errors offered some criteria which we tried to use for the feedback given on both oral and written work. In the activities centred on the four skills, feedback was based more closely on linguistic features than in the problem-solving and small group activities. This enabled the students to focus in on which type of exercise would be most beneficial for them to do within a particular unit.

As it would have overwhelmed the students to have all errors corrected, we tried to determine the level of development of the students receiving feedback (as shown by their notebooks and by the teachers' knowledge of them), and give advice appropriate to the students' levels (and the level of the materials).

The ways in which the feedback is given we consider to be important. There are several factors we took into account:

- We tried to respect the student's ego so that in giving feedback we considered his probability of success.
- We gave the feedback in close proximity to each task so that the student always knew what was being referred to. (This necessitated making audio tapes and, in some instances, video tapes of the student's performance.)
- We tried to develop in the students 'inner criteria' of the type that Gattegno (1976) discusses, so that the students became increasingly self-critical (which is essential for self-direction). We therefore avoided overt, explicit comments in most cases, but let the student consider his work first before the tutor stepped in.

3.5. Learning - Affective Factors

The affective factors associated with the learner's internal system seem to us to be another crucial area in learning a language. The research in this area (mostly by Lambert and Gardner) is succinctly summarized by Stevick:

> "Contemporary psychological findings indicate that attitudinal-motivational variable is probably the single most important factor in academic success."
>
> (Stevick, 1976)

3.5.1. Attitudes

For the purposes of this course we were not able to account for the attitudes of the learners towards the English language and towards British culture. We could only hope to offer a course which presented both the language and culture in a way which was interesting and varied enough to hold their attention and not to produce any serious negative effects. We also planned to expose the students to as much of the culture as possible given the time constraints. Visits to various places and institutions with the inherent personal interaction involved was made an integral part of the course.

3.5.2. Motivation

The Stevick quotation above is particularly relevant to our course because it discusses motivation in relation to the academic situation which is our major concern, and where there are some indications of what factors help foster successful learners.

Firstly, we believe that the adult learner brings a great deal of knowledge and ability to the task of learning (Gattegno, 1976). This makes it possible for him to be partially self-sufficient, and the independent, autonomous, and responsible student is the one most likely to be motivated (Rogers and Disick, 1975).

Social relationships and the role of the teacher contribute to motivation also. This is a factor we cannot deal with directly except for allowing for as much interaction as possible and briefing the teachers on our view of the teacher as a low-keyed advisor and manager, who as part of the classroom group can offer direction and give useful feedback. Both Stevick and Rogers stress this type of teacher role.

The decisions that we made in our course as explained in the previous sections we hoped would all contribute to producing a learning environment conducive to learning, and thereby be a motivating force.

4. CRITERIA FOR COURSE DESIGN

In preparing this course we attempted to remain faithful to the view of language and language learning described above and also to serve the needs of the students for whom the course was intended. The nature and background of the prospective students as described in the introductory section posed some limitations for our course design. Since these students were coming from a rather rigid and 'traditional' educational environment, we felt it would be unprofitable and unwise to plunge them into a completely 'individualised - open classroom' situation of the type described by Newmark (1971) and Allwright et al. (1976).

It was recognised that students might choose to have a teacher-controlled programme and this was as valid a choice as the decision to have a student-controlled programme.

4.1. In keeping with our views in the previous paragraph, we set the following goals for our course design:

- The design would allow for some degree of individual control (more-or-less according to student preferences) within a teacher-controlled superstructure.
- The design would expose the students to English in a rich and natural environment.
- The design would provide the opportunity for students to engage in activities which require the meaningful use of English.
- Finally, the design would provide opportunity for the students to receive feedback on their production.

4.1.1. We attempted to design a course where student input in the selection and ordering of activities was sought and attended to,

but was not the only factor in determining the course progression. There were several kinds of input or 'individual control' where the students had a choice:

- regarding the order in which the units were taken;
- regarding the sub-themes to be emphasised within each unit;
- regarding the skills they wished to concentrate on (i.e., reading, writing, etc.)
- regarding the exercises (types and content) which they completed within each unit.

These options or choices could be more or less student controlled depending on the individuals. If a student, for example, felt the need to be closely advised and directed by the tutor, this was respected and the tutor attempted to help or if necessary prescribe a course of activities to suit the student. However, within these four areas the students were encouraged to make their own decisions based on their interests, a self-evaluation of their skills and weaknesses, and the feedback provided by the teacher. These options for student choice or input occurred within a tutor-controlled framework. Such a tutor-controlled framework was necessary in this case for two reasons:

- This was the first experience with individualized learning for these students and a clear tutor-controlled framework was essential to bridge the gap and provide stability for the course. As Renée Disick notes:

> "A newly designed program of individualized instruction will have better chances of success if it is preceded by a period of thorough preparation and gradual transition from full-class to open-class instruction."
>
> (Disick, 1975, p. 95)

- There is evidence to suggest that even if the students had been thoroughly accustomed to individualized learning situations, a totally student-controlled programme would not have been the most efficient organization. As Atkinson says:

> "There is obviously a place for the learner's judgements in making instructional decisions ... However, using the learner's judgement as one of several items of information in making an instructional decision is quite different from proposing that the learner should have complete control. My data and the data of others indicate that the learner is not a particularly effective decision maker."
>
> (Atkinson, 1972, p. 930)

So, it should be a matter of more or less student/teacher control, but never all one or the other. The teacher has the responsibility to provide opportunities to experience and use English in a natural environment as well as opportunities to receive feedback on production. Within the teacher-controlled framework, the students had the opportunity to choose the topic content that interested them and the type of exercises and skills they considered suitable to their needs.

4.1.2. We attempted to design a course which would expose the students to English in a 'rich' and 'natural' environment and which would offer opportunities to use English meaningfully. We hoped to achieve this in several ways. We used a high proportion of authentic texts, tapes and films, (authentic in the sense that the materials were not originally prepared for EFL purposes) in all phases of the course. This exposed the students to English as it is actually used by native speakers. We planned exercises (group and individual) which replicated 'natural' language use, as opposed to the mechanical use of language found in many drills. Language was used as a tool in these exercises, as a means to solve a problem or complete a task. There was more emphasis on successful task completion (communicative competence) than on simple linguistic accuracy. Also, these exercises frequently involved the students in exchanges with native speakers. In order to ensure the meaningful use of language the students as often as possible had a choice regarding the content of the exercises, so that hopefully they were always involved in using English to complete tasks which really interested them. Finally, the exercises in Optional Individual Activities were skill not 'form' based. They focussed on the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. The problems of linguistic form were only focussed on as they were needed to improve the students' skills in using English. This allowed the students to develop the skills which they needed to complete their tasks rather than concentrate on linguistic features in isolation. In the past these students had studied most aspects of English structure and the other formal systems of English, so in this course they concentrated on using English and improving the skills necessary to use English more effectively.

4.1.3. Another criterion that we attempted to include in our course design was the role of feedback. The course provided the opportunity for the students to receive appropriate feedback in two general ways:

- 'explicit feedback' that was provided by the teacher;
- 'interaction feedback' that was provided by the students' self-perception as they participated in activities (that is, how they were, or were not, understood in the course of an activity).

Explicit feedback was provided formally at three stages in each unit:

- The students received feedback after the first small activity in each unit (see flow chart in Appendix A). The students received feedback on their performance in this activity to help them select a suitable sub-theme group and choose the skills which they concentrated on in the Optional Individual Activities sessions (details in the following section).
- During Optional Individual Activities students received feedback on the work completed. This provided input for further selection of exercises.
- Also, after the Required Small Group Activities sessions (details in the following section) the students received a brief note regarding their performance in the skill focussed on in that activity session. This provided input for selecting the necessary exercises in Optional Individual Activities.

Interaction feedback is more difficult to control, but an attempt was made to make the students aware of their own performance. The primary strategy in this area was to ask students to keep a notebook or 'journal' of their own observations. After they had done reading or written work, they were asked to note down specific linguistic features and skills that had been troublesome. They were also asked to notice and write down any difficulties they encountered in oral activities, such as words that they did not understand or things which they could not say (pronounce or formulate) properly. (Some notes would be in the students' native language, but wherever possible English was to be used.) The teacher also made notes in the journals, particularly after Required Small Group Activities. But the students were encouraged

to make notes about all the feedback that the teacher provided, so that it could be referred to at a later time and serve as a guide for selecting appropriate exercises in Optional Individual Activities sessions.

5. OVERALL COURSE DESIGN

5.1. The Mini-Units

The course was planned for an eight week period beginning Day 1 on Monday of Week 1 and finishing on Friday of Week 8. Day 1 was devoted to administrative activities and general introduction to the course, as well as settling in and unpacking. But before beginning the main units of the Lancaster component and the course work of the Saudi component (in Week 2) the rest of the first week was spent doing three introductory Mini-units. These activities had two objectives:

- to orient the students to the university and town;
- to familiarize the students with the type of 'individualized' activities which are a major part of the Lancaster component.

The content of these mini-units served to provide the information needed to acquaint the students with the university and the town. The topics for these units were as follows:

Unit A: Campus/Play
Unit B: Campus/Work
Unit C: Town and Environs

In order to familiarise the students with the type of individualized activities which they would encounter throughout the course, the Mini-units were designed to mirror the outline of the main units, only being much shorter in length and more teacher-controlled (i.e., fewer options for the students). The outline for Unit A: Campus/Play is as follows (with sample materials in Appendix B).

MINI-UNIT A: CAMPUS/PLAY

SESSION 1: Large Group Presentation: Slide/Tape Show
SESSION 2: Small Group Activity: Map location exercise
SESSION 3: Pairs or Small Group Task: Information gathering
LUNCH
SESSION 4: Individual and Large Group Work:

Preparation of Reports
Presentation of Reports on Tasks
Preparation of Notebooks

All the exercises were in a similar format to those prepared for the main units. The concepts of small group activities and individual or pair-work exercises was introduced. Finally, in order to accustom the students to the organization of the overall course, the mini-units ran simultaneously. The students were divided into three groups. On Day 2 one of these groups did Unit A, one Unit B, and one Unit C. On Day 3 these groups changed to a unit which they had not yet done and on Day 4 they did the final unit. Thus, over the three days, all three groups (all the students) completed all three units, but not in the same order or at the same time.

5.2. The next stage in the overall course plan was Block One. This covered Weeks 2-4. During this period the students were divided into three groups and each group did one of the three main units each week. The units were one week in length and so each week the students began a new unit, and over the three weeks of Block One completed the first three main units. Block Two followed the same format. It covered weeks 5-7, and during this period the students completed units 4-6. Throughout these six weeks the students spent about 6 hours per week doing coursework for the Saudi component of the course.

The second two days of the final week were used to complete projects (see following section: The Project Component). The first day was set aside for the final examinations required by the Saudi authorities. Last, Day 4 was used for the presentation of project work.

5.3. The Units - Themes

The organization of the units was theme based. The topics were as follows:

Unit 1 - Media	Unit 4 - Sport
Unit 2 - Family Life	Unit 5 - The Arab World
Unit 3 - Transport	Unit 6 - Education

Since it was impossible to survey the students' needs and interests, the themes were deliberately general and chosen to cover areas which, it was hoped, would be interesting to the students. By choosing general themes we allowed for many possible approaches to the subjects, so that

hopefully, even though the general topic areas had been pre-determined, the students would be able to find an aspect of each subject which interested them. For each unit we prepared a breakdown of the main theme. Each theme was divided into four sub-themes and for each of these we compiled a long series of possible approaches to that sub-theme (see sub-theme breakdown in Appendix A). As far as possible we attempted to provide materials and exercises on all these aspects of the subject across all the skills which were being considered in that unit. There were practical limitations to the amount of materials that could be provided, but an attempt was made to give the students a wide choice regarding the context of the materials they worked with.

5.4. Unit Outline

Each of the Units can be outlined in the following way:

INITIATION - Large Group (20 students)
Small Group Activity (5 students)

DEVELOPMENT - OPTIONAL INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES
REQUIRED SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

CONSOLIDATION - Notebooks

(More detailed outline in Appendix A)

Each Unit consists of three stages. First is the Initiation stage which is divided into a Large Group session followed by a Small Group Activity. The second is the Development stage which is divided into Optional Individual Activities and Required Small Group Activities. These two activities are the major part of the Unit and occupy the majority of classroom time per Unit. They are conducted in parallel sessions with two hours per day for Optional Individual Activities and one hour per day for Required Small Group Activities. The final stage is the Consolidation stage which is embodied in the notebooks which the students produced as a result of their work on the unit. A more detailed discussion follows, with an explanation of the purpose for each division and examples of the types of activities used.

5.4.1. The primary purpose for the large group activity in the initiation stage at the beginning of each unit is to expose the students to the unit theme in a general way and to arouse their interest in some aspect of the theme. At this step the students are given information about different facets of the theme so that they will have an understanding of the theme in

general and some of the possible approaches to the topic as a basis for the later choice of a sub-theme group. The information is provided in a stimulating and interesting way and the students are motivated to learn more about some aspect of the topic. This is a fairly short session of only about thirty minutes. The presentations are usually multi-media, slide and tape shows, films or VCR's, depending on the materials that are available for each unit theme. Further, depending on the material, there may be a short preparation session to provide any vocabulary or explanations which would be crucial to understanding the materials. In some instances the initial large group session might be a lecture-type presentation. Whatever the initiation session involves there is a short follow-up to allow students to react to the presentation and ask any questions. However, this material is not meant to be totally understood or fully 'gutted' for all possible relevant learning points. It should be an informative experience, but also interesting and enjoyable.

5.4.2. The small group activity which follows this presentation has several objectives. First, it should provide further general information about the unit topic, which will be useful to the students when they choose their sub-theme groups. Secondly, it should provide an opportunity to use English in a topic-related activity. This allows the teacher to provide some feedback which will be helpful in choosing suitable exercises in the Optional Individual Activities. About 90 minutes is devoted to this activity, enough time to engage in a group task and receive some feedback on performance in that session. The activities are usually topic-based, task-oriented communication exercises, which may involve simulations or role play. They also however require the use of writing and reading skills in addition to oral production and listening skills.

5.4.3. The Development stage is divided into two sections. For the Optional Individual Activities the students work in sub-theme groups. As already mentioned, sub-themes are content based and the students choose the group that interests them. Within their sub-theme group the students have a choice of exercises which are based on different aspects of the sub-theme and which focus on different skills. The purpose of these exercises is to provide specific practice in the skills of reading, writing, listening

and speaking. At this time the students also have the opportunity to work on specific features of English which may be difficult for them (e.g., grammatical structures, particular phonemic contrasts, etc.). There is a variety of exercise-types so that the students have some choice of learning modes and styles. In addition the exercises vary in relation to the cognitive levels outlined in Valette (1972) ranging from mechanical to communicative. In Appendix C there is a selection of Optional Individual Activities exercises. These sample exercises have utilised authentic materials. Theme-relevant exercises from ELT materials are also used in most sub-themes.

5.4.3.1. This is perhaps the most individualised section of the course. In the first Optional Individual Activities session, the students receive an index of the skills, and listed for each the exercises available. For each skill there are exercises at three different levels of difficulty. For example, the following is a section from the index for a sub-theme of the Media Unit (see Appendix C for a complete index):

INDEX: MEDIA UNIT
TELECOMMUNICATIONS - SUB-THEME: OPTIONAL INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES

LISTENING:

TITLES	LEVEL	FILE NO.	COMPLETED
Recognizing telephone tones (cf. R)	1	1	.....
Telling You About Tones (cf. R)	2	2	.....
Taking Telephone Messages (cf. R)	2	3	.....
Telephone Information Service (cf. R)	3	4	.....
Interview Switchboard Operator (cf. S)	3	6	.....

With the aid of the teacher and the feedback which the students have already received, they select a suitable exercise in terms of topic, skill and level. Using the code numbers, (e.g. File No. 1) they locate the exercise in the file boxes. The exercise will have complete directions and whenever possible all the materials attached. The format for the exercises is as follows:

SKILL : READING / WRITING etc., or a combination

TITLE : Indicates the content of the exercise

LEVEL : 1, 2 or 3 in ascending order of difficulty

GOAL : This gives the general focus for each section of the exercise itself

CHECK : Information on where answers are available

When complete the teacher marks the work, or in some cases the students are able to check their own work - for example, when they are writing answers to "objective" questions. The teacher then checks off the work as completed in the appropriate column in the index. Then, depending on their abilities and interests, they choose the next exercise, and so on. Each Unit specifies how many exercises should be attempted for that Unit. For example, the sub-theme 'Radio' for the Unit on 'Media' may require a minimum of 10 exercises to be attempted in the Optional Individual Activities sessions. These sessions occupy two hours a day for four days, and there is a teacher for every 10 students. The teacher is there to explain any procedural difficulties, correct work when necessary and generally assist the students with their work. However, the role of the teacher is not seen as that of a 'walking' dictionary or grammar book. The students are encouraged to rely on their own efforts and learn to use dictionaries and reference books when they are needed. Students may be counselled to do activities or special exercises to give them practice in the areas of 'form' which are difficult for them or which have been consistently problematical. But, generally, the exercises done during these sessions are skill based and not 'form' based.

5.4.3.2. The second part of the Development stage is the Required Small Group Activities sessions. Usually the students are given a choice of activities, with the alternatives representing different aspects of the Unit topic. For example, in the Media unit, they have a choice between a newspaper related activity and a radio broadcasting activity. The main purpose of these activities is to provide the opportunity to use English meaningfully in performing a task or solving a problem. The main emphasis is on the content and meaning of the task and not on the accuracy of linguistic forms used. However, a brief note

of feedback is provided at the end of each session which serves to guide the students' choice of exercises in the Optional Individual Activities sessions and to make it very clear that these activities are not 'extras' just tacked on for a little 'light relief'. In order to assist the teacher in providing feedback each of the four sessions has a skill emphasis. Although all the sessions probably require all the skills, the teacher focusses only on the skill which has been assigned to that session for feedback purposes. Although this is rather an arbitrary division, it is felt that the teacher's task is made somewhat easier by this procedure. However, if there is a particular problem which is not related to the skill assigned to that session the teacher may mention it if the student has not perceived the problem already. These activities are similar in kind to those described for the Small Group Activity in the Initiation stage; group tasks which require the use of language skills for resolution. They are often simulations and 'games' which may involve some role-playing. But hopefully they are activities which are relevant to the students' needs and interests. In some cases the same activity continues over all four sessions and in other cases each session may have a self-contained activity.

5.4.4. At the Consolidation stage the students turn in a notebook of their activities and exercises for that unit. This collection of materials also includes their feedback notes for that unit. Although there is no final wrap-up activity, it is hoped that the notebooks are a tangible representation of the students' progress in terms of their knowledge about the theme and their skills in using English. These notebooks are also a record of the students' activities which they can take home with them. And they are also used in the assessment of the students' work.

6. PROJECT COMPONENT

There is one further component of the course which needs to be mentioned; this is the Project Component. From Weeks 2 to 7 one

hour a week was assigned to this component. During this time the students were introduced to the possible topics for project work and began organising and gathering the material which they would need. There were two full days in the final week for completing the projects, and one day for presentation. This work was done in small groups of 2 or 3 for the most part. However, depending on the students' interests, some groups were larger; for example, those producing a play or a skit of some kind. The purpose of this component was similar to the Required Small Group Activities in providing an opportunity to use English as a tool for completing a task. However, this was a long range activity which also provided some continuity throughout the course, provided opportunities to study one subject in depth (which sometimes required writing letters and conducting interviews 'for real') and provided a final session where the students presented the results of their project work. The actual topics were limited only by the students' interests and the resources available at the University and in the Lancaster area. The scope was very wide, so they were able to choose a topic and task which was truly of interest to them and which motivated them to utilise their English skills in fully exploring their chosen topic.

7. ASSESSMENT

Assessment of the students' work in the Lancaster component was based largely on an evaluation of the notebooks which the students produced for each of the main units. They were evaluated in terms of how much successful work they had completed in relation to the minimum requirements of that unit. The students were also assessed on their project work and the presentation of that work in the final week.

In our view of language learning we do not see a conventional progression in terms of mastery of separate 'chunks' of language which can be evaluated by means of a multiple-choice type of discrete item test. Learning does seem to manifest stages, as has been noted in the section on language learning, but these stages are seen in psychological terms rather than in terms of mastery of separate structural features. In addition, for such a test to have any validity we would have needed far more information on the background of the students, the work they

had been doing during the past year, and we would carefully have had to test and grade them in these terms on entry to this course. As these are problems of a practical nature which in essence conflict with the basic philosophy we adopted, we did not design the course to accommodate a final test in conventional terms. There were, however, constraints to this approach. One was that although 'language use' had been predominant in our minds when setting up learning tasks, we were aware that 'language usage' is an integral part of language use, and in fact several of our tasks and exercises were basically practising language form. These exercises, however, had been so individualised that to test progress in these terms it would have been necessary to construct individual tests. A further constraint was the fact that the University of Riyad required a final assessment of a more conventional type, in addition to the ongoing feedback and evaluation we considered an essential part of our course. Students were therefore given a standardised test (ELBA) when they arrived in Lancaster in order to satisfy this requirement, and the final week included an examination based on 'skills' rather than specific structural features, including a dictation, a cloze test and an individual oral interview situation.

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APPENDIX A : COURSE DESIGN

1. General Course Outline
2. Unit Flow Chart and Schedule
3. Sample Unit Themes, Sub-Themes and Breakdowns

1. GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE (Lancaster Component)

WEEK 1 : INTRODUCTORY UNIT

Day 1 - Administrative details

Days 2-4 - One of three Mini-units (⅓ of the group in each unit per day)

Unit A - Campus/Play
Unit B - Campus/Work
Unit C - Town and Environs

Day 5 - Tour

WEEKS 2-4 : BLOCK ONE

Units 1-3 (One unit per week, ⅓ of group per unit per week)
Projects (One hour per week)

Unit 1 - Media
Unit 2 - Family Life
Unit 3 - Transport

WEEKS 5-7 : BLOCK TWO

Units 4-6 (One unit per week, ⅓ of group per unit per week)
Projects (One hour per week)

Unit 4 - Sport
Unit 5 - Arab World
Unit 6 - Education

WEEK 8 : WRAP-UP AND ASSESSMENT

Day 1 - Examinations
Days 2-3 - Complete projects
Day 4 - Presentation of projects

2. UNIT FLOW CHART AND SCHEDULE

(One-third of the group per unit, each unit repeated three times)

INITIATION

I. Large group (i.e. 20 students)

Purpose: Introduce unit topic generally and motivate
Activity: Multi-media presentation
Time: 30 minutes

II. Small group activity (i.e. 5 students)

Purpose: Further introduction to unit topic/ provide input for later choices/ opportunity to USE English and receive feedback
Activity: Simulations, tasks, role plays
Time: 90 minutes

DEVELOPMENT

Optional Individual Activities	Required Small Group Activities
Choice of 4 sub-theme groups	Choice of 2 sub-theme groups
Purpose: Develop skills with exercises that have theme content and skill focus	Purpose: Use skills in communication tasks - group oriented activities. (Each session has skill focus to order tutor feedback)
Activity: Choice of exercises, negotiated with tutor feedback	Activity: Simulations, games, tasks
Time: 2 hours per day X 4 days	Time: 1 hour per day X 4 days

CONSOLIDATION

Notebooks

Purpose: Keep a record of exercises and activities completed
Keep a record of feedback (tutor and self-evaluation

Weekly Schedule for Blocks 1 and 2

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9.00-10.00	S.C.	S.C.	REQ.S.G.	S.C.	REQ.S.G.
10.00-11.00	L.G.	O.A.	O.A.	O.A.	O.A.
BREAK					
11.30-12.30	S.G.	O.A.	O.A.	O.A.	O.A.
LUNCH					
1.30-2.30	S.C.	S.C.	FREE T.	S.C.	FREE T.
2.30-3.20	PROJ.	REQ.S.G.		REQ.S.G.	

Key to Weekly Schedule

S.C. = Saudi Component
L.G. = Large Group Presentation
S.G. = Small Group Activity
PROJ. = Projects Preparation
O.A. = Optional Individual Activities
REQ.S.G. = Required Small Group Activity

3. BREAKDOWN OF UNIT TOPICS INTO SUB-THEMES and POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

UNIT 1: MEDIA

Sub-Themes: Radio TV Telecommunications Newspapers/Magazines

Points for discussion and lines of approach to each sub-theme:

Historical development
Technical details
Organization and administration
Critical issues
Comparison with Saudi Arabia
Planning a programme/issue
Varieties and roles
Educational application
Great events/moments

UNIT 2: THE FAMILY

Sub-Themes: Children Parents Family Unit The Community

Points for discussion and lines of approach to each sub-theme:

The place of religion
Roles
Occupations
Leisure/Hobbies
Housing/Facilities
Welfare/Social affairs
Critical issues
Comparison with Saudi Arabia

UNIT 3: TRANSPORT

Sub-Themes: Road Rail Air Sea

Points for discussion and lines of approach to each sub-theme:

Historical development
Technical details
Organization and administration
Goods v. People
Economics and inter-dependence
Impact on the environment
Other critical issues
Future developments
Comparison with Saudi Arabia

UNIT 4: SPORT

Sub-Themes: Individual ball games | Individual non-ball games | Team ball games | Others

Points for discussion and lines of approach to each sub-theme:

Rules/Laws, etc.
History and development
Organization and administration
Focus on a local team or star
Sport and State
Professional and amateur
Sporting heroes
Sport and controversial issues
The Olympics
Comparison with Saudi Arabia

UNIT 5: THE ARAB WORLD

Sub-Themes: The Arts | Ethnography | Economic Development | History

Points for discussion and lines of approach to each sub-theme:

Regional variation
Influence of the West
Influence on the West
Local attitudes (i.e., in Britain and Lancaster)
Critical issues
A special topic/person/period/craft, etc.

UNIT 6: EDUCATION

Sub-Themes: Pre-School/Primary | Secondary | Higher | Further

Points for discussion and lines of approach to each sub-theme:

Private v. State
History and development
Administration and organization
Methods and techniques
Facilities
Examinations and assessment
Subjects taught
Teachers' and Students' roles and rights
Controversial issues
Comparison with Saudi Arabia

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APPENDIX B: MINI-UNIT A

1. Unit Outline
2. Lesson Plan
3. Location Exercise
4. Selection of Tasks
5. Selection of Follow-up Worksheets

1. Unit Outline

MINI-UNIT: CAMPUS/PLAY

SESSION 1: Large Group Presentation: Slide/Tape Show

SESSION 2: Small Group Activity: Map Location Exercise

SESSION 3: Pair or Small Group Task: Information Gathering

Lunch

SESSION 4: Individual and Large Group Work

- Preparation of Reports
- Presentation of Reports on Tasks
- Preparation of Notebooks

2. Lesson Plan: Mini-Unit A "Campus/Play"

SESSION 1: Large Group Presentation

Purpose: Introduce campus, focus students' attention.

Activity: Watch slide/tape show: "Bailrigg Experience".

Materials: MSU slide/tape show.

Procedure:

1) Introduce "show" - tell students to relax and enjoy it.
2) Watch "show".
3) Ask for reactions - Enjoyable? - Why?
   Is Lancaster University like Saudi Arabia?
   Have you seen all these places?
   etc.

SESSION 2: Small Groups (1/3 of large group)

Purpose: Look more closely at the location of "important places" on the campus.

Activity: Map location exercise.

Materials: A large blank map of the campus - individual small maps.

Procedure:

1) Tutor has a large version of a map of the campus, buildings are marked, but not labelled.
2) First locate present classroom and orient students to the map in relation to their real location.
3) Hand out maps, one to each student. Only one or two places will be marked on each.
4) Tutor begins asking where places are and those who know (because it is on their map) will show the rest of the class. It is not necessary to give elaborate directions - pointing may be sufficient. But encourage as much discussion as possible. Have all students mark the places on their own maps after they

have been pointed out and labelled on the large map. Practice saying the names of places if necessary. At the end all the important places should be correctly marked on all students' maps as well as on the large map. Compare carefully to make sure they all have been accurate.

5) Tutor asks: "Can you find these places now?" Discuss how to ask for information and directions:
"Where is the ...
"Can you tell me where the ... ... please?"

SESSION 3: Pairs or groups of three

Purpose:
1) Actually find places on campus
2) Gather useful information

Activity: Information gathering tasks.

Materials: 13 Tasks.

Procedure:
1) Introduction - explanation of exercise instruction format.
2) Tutors give out tasks and make sure each "team" understands what they are to do.
3) Students proceed with their tasks.

SESSION 4: Individual and Large Group Work

Purpose: Summarise task work and share information

Activity: Prepare and make a report about the task completed in Session 3. Compile a notebook of the useful information presented.

Materials: Worksheets for taking notes during report presentations.

Procedure:
1) According to Task instructions, students should complete their preparation for a brief oral report on their morning's task.
2) The teams will be divided into two groups (7 teams each). Each team will make a brief report, using the blackboard if necessary, to their group.
3) Other students in that group will take notes - filling in the worksheets provided by the tutors before each team report. Students are encouraged to ask questions about anything they do not understand or which is needed to complete the worksheet.

4) The two groups will share information (informally) so that all students have completed worksheets for all the tasks. Organise these sheets into a notebook, making an index and tidy up appearance - recopy if needed.

5) Tutors check notebooks.

3. Map Location Exercise

Tutor's list of important places:

Alexandra Square (8)
Bailrigg House Medical Centre (33)
Bowland College (26)
Bowland Tower (7)
Bus Stop (24)
Cartmel College (3)
Chaplaincy Centre (29)
County College (1)
Faraday Lecture Theatre (5)
Furness College (12)
Fylde College (13)
Gillow House (19)
Great Hall (32)
Grizedale College (17)
Indoor Recreation Centre (20
Jack Hylton Music Rooms (30)
Language Services Building - MSU (2)
Library (23)
Lonsdale College (28)
Nuffield Drama Studio (31)
Pendle College (18)
Petrol Station (11)
Sports Pavilion (34)
University House Reception (25)
Visitors Car Park (P)

Each student will receive a copy of the map with two places marked on it:

Map 1. Alexandra Square (8)
County College (1)

" 2. Bailrigg House Medical Centre (33)
Language Services Building (2)

" 3. Bailrigg House Medical Centre (33)
Faraday Lecture Theatre (5)

" 4. Library (23)
Lonsdale College (28)

Map 5. Furness College (12)
Faraday Lecture Theatre (5)

" 6. Great Hall (32)
Pendle College (18)

" 7. Nuffield Drama Studio (31)
Cartmel College (3)

" 8. Bowland Tower (7)
Indoor Recreation Centre (20)

" 9. Indoor Recreation Centre (20)
Grizedale College (17)

" 10. Bowland College (26)
Jack Hylton Music Rooms (30)

" 11. Bus Stop (24)
Fylde College (13)

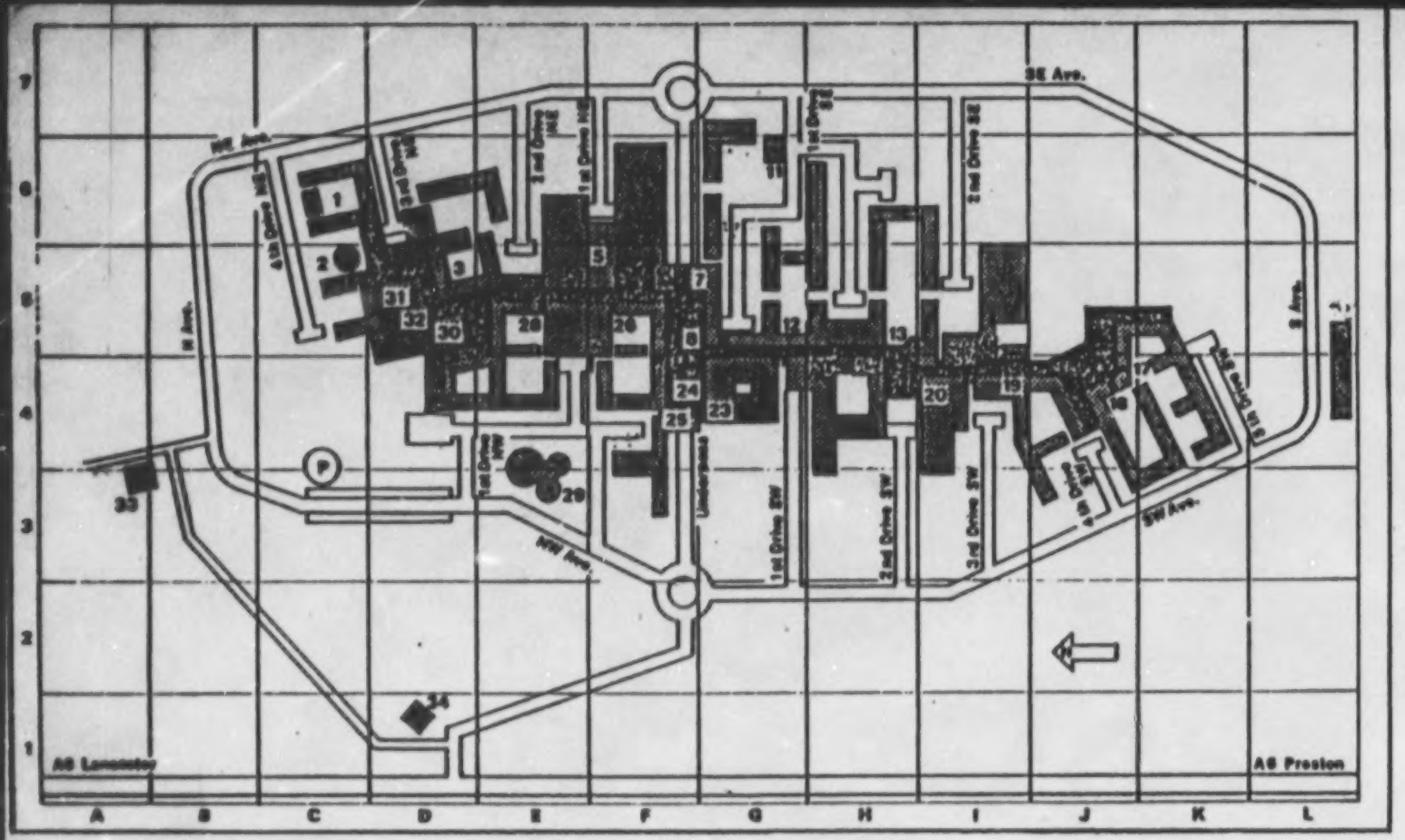
" 12. Gillow House (19)
Bus Stop (24)

" 13. Chaplaincy Centre (29)
Language Services Building (2)

" 14. Petrol Station (11)
University House Reception (25)

" 15. Sports Pavilion (34)
Alexandra Square (8)

" 16. Visitors' Car Park (P)
Library (23)



The University of Lancaster

MAP LOCATION GAME

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
5. _____
7. _____
8. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
17. _____
19. _____
20. _____
23. _____
24. _____
25. _____
26. _____
28. _____
29. _____
30. _____
31. _____
32. _____
33. _____
34. _____
P _____

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4. Selection of Tasks

TASK 1: INDOOR RECREATION CENTRE

GOAL: You will become familiar with the facilities available in the Indoor Recreation Centre

- by providing the information requested in the form of a table as outlined below.
- by presenting a short (2-3 minute) oral report on the information you have gathered.

SOURCES: Interview the porters at the Indoor Recreation Centre.

STEPS: 1) Find out the following information:

a) 5 sports (in addition to the example provided) which can be played in the Indoor Recreation Centre.
b) The times when these sports can be played.
c) The equipment which is available to hire for these sports.
d) The cost of hiring equipment for these sports.
e) Whether booking is necessary for these sports.

2) Arrange the information in the following table:

SPORT	TIMES	EQUIPMENT	COST	BOOKING
Squash	8.30 a.m.-9 p.m.	Rackets & balls	Racket: 20p Balls: 5P	Yes

3) Prepare a brief (2-3 minute) summary of the information you have gathered. You will present this information in an oral report in the afternoon session. You may use a blackboard if necessary. There will be additional preparation time in the afternoon before the presentation of reports.

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TASK 5: SNACKBAR FACILITIES

GOAL: You will become familiar with the snackbar facilities available on the campus:

- by providing the information requested in the form of a table as outlined below
- by presenting a short (2-3 minute) oral report on the information you have gathered.

SOURCES: Visits to snackbars and the notice posted outside Lonsdale Refectory.

STEPS: 1) Find out the following information about snackbars:

a) What snackbars are open during the summer?
b) What hours are they open?
c) List ten items commonly available in snackbars and their prices.

2) Arrange the information in the following tables:

	SNACKBARS	TIMES
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

	ITEMS AVAILABLE	PRICES
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

3) Prepare a brief (2-3 minute) summary of the information you have gathered. You will present this information in an oral report in the afternoon session. You may use a balckboard if necessary. There will be additional preparation time in the afternoon before the reports are presented.

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TASK 10: POST OFFICE & BANKS

GOALS: You will become familiar with the facilities and services of the campus Post Office and banks and their relevant charges:

- by answering the questions given below
- by presenting a short (2-3 minute) oral report on the information you have gathered.

SOURCES: Visit the Post Office and the banks, interview clerks and read relevant notices.

STEPS: 1) Answer the following questions:

TIMES: A.1. What time does the Post Office open/close?.....
.....

2. What time do the banks open/close?.....
.....

3. Do they close for lunch? P.O. (yes/no) .....
Banks .....

4. What time is mail collected from the P.O.?
.....

LETTERS: B.1. What are the rates for internal mail?

First Class.....

Second Class.....

2. What is the important difference between first and second class mail?
.....

3. What is the air mail rate for letters to Saudi Arabia? .....

4. How much does an air letter cost?.....

TELEGRAMS: C.1. How many different telegram rates are there to Saudi Arabia?.....

2. What is the minimum charge for each rate?.....

3. How long do they normally take to arrive?.....

BANK: D.1. What is the current exchange rate for Saudi riyals?.....

2. What form of identification is required to cash a traveller's cheque?.....

2) Prepare a brief (2-3 minute) summary of the information you have gathered. You will present this information in an oral report in the afternoon session. You may use the blackboard if necessary. There will be additional preparation time in the afternoon before the reports are presented.

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TASK 13: LAUNDRY AND DRY CLEANING

GOAL: You will become familiar with the facilities on the campus for washing, drying and dry cleaning clothes:

- by finding answers to the following questions and completing the table outlined below.
- by presenting a short (2-3 minute) oral report on the information you have gathered.

SOURCES: Visit the laundromat, read relevant notices, interview the porter in your college and the assistant in Attwater's Clothes Shop.

STEPS: 1) Find out the following information from the Laundromat:

	WASHING	DRYING
A) Number of machines		
Cost per load		
Time per load		

B) What hours is the laundromat open?

C) Briefly describe the operation instructions:

D) What is the procedure if a machine breaks down?

2) Find out from your college porter:

A) What washing/drying facilities are available in the college.

B) Where are these facilities located?

C) What are the charges (if any)?

3) Go the Attwaters Clothes Shop and find out the following information on dry cleaning:

A) How long does it take for clothes to be cleaned?

B) What does it cost to get the following articles dry cleaned?

1 pair of trousers

1 shirt

1 sweater

1 jacket

4) Prepare a brief (2-3 minute) summary of the information you have gathered. You will present this information in an oral report in the afternoon session. You may use the blackboard if necessary. There will be additional preparation time in the afternoon before the reports are presented.

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TASK 1 WORKSHEET

INDOOR RECREATION CENTRE

The Indoor Recreation Centre provides facilities for a wide range of sports. There are 6 squash courts, a table-tennis area, a weight-training room, a small hall for trampolining and table-tennis, and a large hall. This is used for a variety of sports: 5-a-side football, badminton, netball, basketball, and roller-skating. Some sports can only be played at certain times, and courts and equipment have to be booked. There is a charge for hiring certain equipment.

Now listen for the following information on 5 sports which are available at the Indoor Rec:

	SPORT	TIMES	EQUIPMENT	COST	BOOKING
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

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TASK 5 WORKSHEET

SNACKBAR FACILITIES

During term-time, there are a number of restaurants and snack bars on the campus, where students can buy full meals or drinks and snacks. During the summer, such facilities are limited.

We want you now to listen to find our where the snack bars are that will be open during your stay here and how much certain items cost.

	SNACKBARS	OPENING HOURS
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

	ITEMS AVAILABLE	PRICE
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

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TASK 10 WORKSHEET

POST OFFICE AND BANKS

The campus has an internal mail system which is free, but of course mail for outside the campus has to go through the Post Office. There is one Post Office and two banks for those students with bank accounts. Most students have some kind of grant which is normally paid into a bank at the beginning of each term.

Listen to the report and note the following points of information:

1. The Post Office opens at _____ and closes at _____.
2. The banks open at _____ and close at _____.
3. You must post a letter before _____ if you want it to be delivered the next day.
4. A letter within Britain costs _____ by first class mail and _____ by second class mail.
5. A _____ class letter generally arrives the next day, but a _____ class letter may take _____ days.
6. A letter to Saudi Arabia costs _____ and an air letter costs _____.
7. A telegram to Saudi Arabia normally takes _____ hours and costs _____ for _____ words.
8. The current exchange rate for Saudi riyals is _____.
9. A _____ is needed to cash a traveller's cheque.

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TASK 13 WORKSHEET

LAUNDRY

Students are responsible for their own laundry so the Laundromat is well used. In addition to this facility, there are washing and drying facilities in most colleges and the clothes shop on campus provides a dry cleaning service.

Now listen for the following details:

1. The Laundromat is open _____.
2. The washing machines cost _____.
3. The drying machines cost _____.
4. In _____ College the following laundry facilities are available:

5. Dry cleaning takes about _____ days.
6. A shirt cost _____ to be dry cleaned.
7. A pair of trousers costs _____.
8. A sweater costs _____.
9. A jacket costs _____.

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APPENDIX C: MEDIA UNIT

1. Outline of Media Unit
2. Lesson Plan: Small Group Activity
3. Sample Index for Optional Individual Activities
4. Sample OIA Exercises
5. Lesson Plan and Sample Materials for a Required Small Group Activity

1. Outline of Media Unit

STAGE 1: Large Group Presentation

Purpose: To introduce the theme of the Unit and motivate interest.

Activity: Kaleidoscopic Overview of Media

Materials: Slides and commentary from 'Ladybird' Books -
"The Story of Newspapers"
"The Telephone"
"The Story of Radio"
"The History of TV" (from 'Slide Centre')

Small Group Activity

Purpose: Further introduction to Media theme.
To provide an opportunity to USE English and receive feedback.

Activity: ISLEX

Materials: A passage for ISLEX based on the unit theme.) see 2 below

Procedure:) see 2 below

STAGE 2: Optional Individual Activities Sessions

Purpose: To develop language skills.

Activities: Exercises of different types.

Materials and Procedures: See 3 and 4 below.

Required Small Group Activities

Purpose: To practise using skills in communication task activities.

Activities: Choice of 'Radio Broadcast' or 'Newspaper' simulation.

Materials: ILEA Simulations.

Procedure: See 5 below.

2. Lesson Plan - Media Unit - Small Group Activity

Purpose: To give students a further view of the Unit topic in order for them to focus their interests on a particular sub-theme.

To provide a task that requires the students to use a range of skills so that there is some basis for selection of skill area.

Activity: ISLEX - Integrated Skills Language Exercise (after Whitaker, 1977).

Materials: A reading passage divided into 5-8 sections with each section printed on a separate sheet of paper and indexed (with the first three letters).

Procedure:

1) The teacher divides the group into smaller groups of 3-4 students (depending upon the number of divisions of the reading passage) and gives each group one of the sections of the passage. This is done randomly.

2) The students are told that as a total group they have a complete reading passage. Their task is to put the sections together in the correct order. This is done in the following way:

3) Each small group together writes a summary of their section, making it as short as possible.

4) The teacher asks the groups which of them thinks they have the first part of the overall passage (more than one group may think they have this part). One person from each group then reads out their summary to the whole class and each student writes this down, putting the index letters first.
(One student may be writing on a blackboard which cannot be seen by the others. This aids in final organisation and correction of dictation.)

5) The groups give their summaries in any order they think makes sense. (The teacher should remain in the background and let the students try and decide among themselves the most sensible order.)

6) When all sections are summarised the students should decide on the correct order (using the index letters as the reference).

7) The teacher hands out copies of the overall passage.

8) The teacher encourages the students to discuss the nature of the exercise itself and where they encountered difficulties.

9) If there is time a discussion of the passage itself will be useful for comprehension.

3. Index of Sample Optional Individual Activities Exercises

INDEX: MEDIA UNIT

TELECOMMUNICATIONS - SUB-THEME: OPTIONAL ACTIVITY EXERCISES

NOTE: R = READING; S = SPEAKING; L = LISTENING; W = WRITING

LISTENING:

TITLES	LEVEL	FILE NO.	COMPLETED
Recognizing Telephone Tones (cf. R)	1	1	.....
Telling You About Tones (cf. R)	2	2	.....
Taking Telephone Messages (cf. R)	2	3	.....
Telephone Information Service (cf. R)	3	4	.....
Inverview Switchboard Operator (cf. S)	3	6	.....

SPEAKING:

TITLES	LEVEL	FILE NO.	COMPLETED
Making Telephone Calls	2	5	.....
Trimphone - A Modern Telephone (cf. R)	2	7	.....
Interview Switchboard Operator (cf. S)	3	6	.....

READING:

TITLES	LEVEL	FILE NO.	COMPLETED
History of Telephone Instrument	1	8	.....
Recognizing Telephone Tones (cf. L)	1	1	.....
Trimphone - A Modern Telephone (cf. W/S)	2	7	.....
Telling You About Tones (cf. L)	2	2	.....
Taking Telephone Messages (cf. L)	2	3	.....
Telephoning The Emergency Service (cf. W)	2	10	.....
Telephone Information Service (cf. L)	3	4	.....
The Post Office Tower (cf. W)	3	9	.....

WRITING:

TITLES	LEVEL	FILE NO.	COMPLETED
Application for a Job	2	12	.....
Telephoning the Emergency Service (cf. R)	2	10	.....
The Post Office Tower (cf. W)	3	9	.....
Dial-A-Celebrity	3	11	.....

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4. Sample Optional Individual Activities Exercises

SKILL: READING/LISTENING FILE NO. 1

TITLE: RECOGNISING TELEPHONE TONES

LEVEL: 1

I Reading for Information

Read the poster and answer the following questions:

a) How many kinds of telephone tones are there?_____

b) Which tone tells you that you are being called from a coin box?_____

c) Which tone tells you that the number is being rung?

_____

d) Which tone tells you that the number is out of service?

_____

e) Which tone usually means the number you are calling is in use?

_____

f) Which tone tells you that the exchange equipment is ready for you to start dialling? _____

II Listening

(Dialling tone: DT; Ringing tone: RT; Pay tone: PT
Engaged tone: ET; Number unobtainable tone: NT)

Listen to the tape. You will hear the different telephone tones. First is the DT. It sounds like this ..... (etc.)

Now you must identify each tone. Write the letters for the tone you hear:

1. 2. 3. 4.

5. 6. 7. 8.

CHECK: Check your answers against the key.

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You don't HAVE to be tone-deaf about our telephone tones!

Here's how to recognise them:

Dialling tone
-a continuous purring-tells you that the exchange equipment is ready for you to start dialling

Ringing tone
-a repeated double beat-tells you that the called number is being rung

Engaged tone
-a repeated single note-usually means the number you are calling is in use, but it can also mean that the exchange equipment is busy

Number unobtainable tone
-a continuous high-pitched note-tells you that the number is either out of service or has not been allocated to anyone

Pay tone
-high-pitched rapid pips-means you are being called from a 'Pay-on-answer' coin box

Tune in to the Post Office exchange operator if you don't know these tones. She will be pleased to play them for you free of charge

© Post Office Telecommunications

SKILL: READING/LISTENING FILE NO. 2

TITLE: TELLING YOU ABOUT TONES

LEVEL: 2

READING FOR MAIN IDEAS:

Read the passage "What the tones tell you".
Answer the following questions:

a) How many telephone tones are there? .....

b) Complete these sentences:

If you dial before you hear the dialling tone you may ...

If you hear the engaged tone you should ...

The first time you hear the number unobtainable tone you should ...

You will hear a pay tone if your call is coming from ...

If you are making a call from a "pay-on-answer" coin box you will hear the pay tone when ...

LISTENING FOR INFERENCE

Read the following directions and listen to the exercise on your tape.

DIRECTIONS: You will hear a situation, a tone and the question, "What do you do?" Circle the best answer on your worksheet. You may stop the machine between items to read the situation and mark your answer. You may rewind and listen to the tape several times if necessary.

FIRST, you will hear each tone.

EXAMPLE: You have dialled a number and you hear this tone (.....) What do you do?

a. wait for an answer. b. dial again.
c. put money in the box. d. call the operator.

1. You want to make a phone call and you pick up the receiver and hear this tone. (.....) What do you do?

a. wait for an answer. b. put money in.
c. dial your number. d. hang up.

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2. Your friend has called you and while you are talking you hear this tone: (.....) What do you do?

   a. put money in the box
   b. call the operator.
   c. dial again.
   d. wait for your friend to put money in the box.

3. You have dialled a number and you hear this tone: (.....) What do you do?

   a. wait for an answer.
   b. wait and dial again.
   c. call the operator.
   d. hang up.

4. You have dialled a number and you hear this tone: (.....) What do you do?

   a. hang up.
   b. call the operator.
   c. check your number and dial again.
   d. put money in the coin box.

5. You are calling a friend from a coin box telephone. While you are talking you hear this tone: (.....) What do you do?

   a. wait for your friend to put money in the box.
   b. dial again.
   c. put money in the box yourself.
   d. call the operator.

6. You have dialled the number several times and checked your number carefully. Every time you dial the number you hear this tone: (.....) What do you do?

   a. hang up.
   b. wait and dial again.
   c. wait for an answer.
   d. call the operator.

CHECK: After you have finished answering all the questions, check your work with the tutor's answer key.

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TELLING YOU ABOUT TONES: TAPE TRANSCRIPT

Listening Practice - Telling you about tones.

DIRECTIONS: You will hear a situation, a tone and the question, "What do you do?" Circle the best answer on your worksheet. You may stop the machine between items to read the situation and mark your answer. You may rewind and listen to the tape several times if necessary.

FIRST: you will hear each tone:

This is the dialling tone: (.....)
This is the ringing tone:
This is the engaged tone:
This is the number unobtainable tone:
This is the pay tone:

Repeat:

Now: here is an example:

You have dialled a number and you hear this tone: (...RT...)
What do you do?

Answer: You will wait for an answer.

Now you are ready for situation number one:

1. You want to make a phone call and you pick up the receiver and hear this tone: (...DT...) What do you do?

   Stop your machine and circle the best answer on your worksheet.

2. Your friend has called you and while you are talking you hear this tone: (...PT...) What do you do?

   Stop your machine and circle the best answer on your worksheet.

3. You have dialled a number and you hear this tone: (...ET...) What do you do?

   Stop your machine and circle the best answer on your worksheet.

4. You have dialled a number and you hear this tone (...NT...) What do you do?

   Stop your machine and circle the best answer on your worksheet.

5. You are calling a friend from a coin box telephone. While you are talking you hear this tone (...PT...) What do you do?

   Stop your machine and circle the best answer on your worksheet.

6. You have dialled the number several times and checked your number carefully. Every time you dial the number you hear this tone (...NT...) What do you do?

   Stop your machine and cirlce the best answer on your worksheet.

After you have finished answering all the questions check your work with the tutor's answer key.

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READING PASSAGE: TELLING YOU ABOUT TONES

What the tones tell you

FILE NO. 2

Dialling tone – a low pitched burr – tells you that the exchange equipment is ready for you to start dialling. If you dial before you hear this tone you may get a wrong number.

Ringing tone – a repeated double beat – tells you that the called number is being rung. Allow a reasonable time for an answer; if there is no reply, replace the receiver and try again later.

Engaged tone – a repeated single note usually means the number you are calling is in use, but it can also mean that the exchange equipment is busy. In either case, replace the receiver and try again in about five minutes.

Number unobtainable tone – a continuous high-pitched note – tells you that the number is either out of service or spare. If you hear this tone, replace your receiver, check that you are dialling the correct dialling code and number and then call again. If you again hear the tone, call the Post Office operator and explain what has happened.

Pay tone – high-pitched rapid pips – means you are being called from a 'Pay-on-answer' coin box. The caller must insert money in order to stop Pay tone and speak to you. Give the caller time to put his money in the box. You will also hear this tone when you make a call from a 'Pay-on-answer' coin box: it means that your call has been answered and you must put money in the box before you can speak to the called person.

If you do not know the sound of these tones the exchange operator will be pleased to demonstrate them to you.

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SKILL: SPEAKING/LISTENING FILE NO. 6

TITLE: INTERVIEWING THE SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR

LEVEL: 3

I The aim is to interview the person responsible for the switchboard at the University to find out certain information.

As part of a general inspection of University facilities, you are conducting an enquiry into telephone services on the campus. You need to know the following information:

The essential function of the switchboard

The annual cost to the University for - external calls
- internal calls
- international calls

The number of lines

The number of extensions

The average number of incoming calls per day in term time/vacations
" " " " outgoing calls " " "
" " " " international calls " " "

What hours the switchboard is manned

The number of staff

If the switchboard is running at full capacity

If an extension is required

Prepare a list of questions, including the above points and any other points that you think are relevant and important.

Get permission to interview the person responsible.

Record the interview.

Report to the group on the results of your interview.

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SKILL: READING/WRITING FILE NO. 10

TITLE: TELEPHONING THE EMERGENCY SERVICES

LEVEL: 2

I Word Study

Find these three words in the passage:

kiosk
accurately
urgent

If you are not sure what they mean in the passage, look them up in the dictionary and write the meanings beside the words above.

Find out what colour telephone kiosks are in Britain_____

Do you have kiosks like this in Saudi Arabia? If so, what colour are they?_____

II Reading for Facts

Read the poster quickly to find the required information. Answer these questions:

a) What emergency services are available?

1. 4.
2. 5.
3. 6.

b) In an emergency you usually dial _____

c) You pay _____

d) You speak to the _____

e) If you are not sure what emergency service you need, you ask for _____

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III Re-arranging Sentences into Correct Sequence

Read the following sentences carefully. They form a conversation between a telephone operator and a caller. Put the sentences into a sensible order and decide who is speaking.

730 4621?

What shall I do?

Oh thank goodness you're there. I need help.

What number are you calling from?

Is he conscious?

Emergency. Which service do you require?

Number? Oh, this is 730 4621.

Yes. Listen, please send someone quickly, my uncle's been attacked.

Keep calm sir. The police and an ambulance will be on their way as quickly as possible.

We'll do our best sir. Don't panic and do what I've asked you.

Which service do you require? Can you tell me what's happened?

Make sure the injured person doesn't move. Keep him warm. Try not to touch anything.

I need help. I've just come in and found the house broken into and ...

Yes, just, but he's bleeding from the head, and everything's in a mess.

I'll put a blanket round him. But please hurry.

Begin like this:

Operator: Emergency. Which service do you require?

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IV Text Study

We are going to look at the way instructions are expressed in writing. Read the poster again. How many passive verb forms can you find? _____

The reason is that the poster is addressing you, the public. It is speaking directly to the person who is reading. It is very personal and is giving instructions. We do not find sentences like this:

The operator must be told what emergency service is required.

How is this meaning expressed in the poster?

_____

Count the number of imperative verbs (commands). _____

In what way is one of them different from the others?

Did you notice? It was like this one:

"Hello John, come in. Do sit down."

Find the one in the poster and write it:

_____

Do is used for emphasis, in a polite way.

Ask someone firmly but politely to be quiet._____

You very much want someone to come and see you soon. What could you say to them?

_____

V Practice

Now try and write a list of instructions for telling people what to do in case of fire.

Tell people - to try and control the fire, using ...
- what number to dial and what to tell the operator
- how to sound the Fire Alarm
- what to do when the Fire Alarm sounds
- not to use the lift

Now go to the College lobby and find the notice telling people what to do in case of fire. Write down what it says.

Are there any other instructions around the building in case of fire? What do they say?

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READING PASSAGE: TELEPHONING THE EMERGENCY SERVICES FILE NO. 10

Poster: "Telephoning the Emergency Services"

Post Office/Telecommunications

Issued by THQ Publicity Division Education Service
(Cheapside House, 138 Cheapside,
London, EC2V 6JH.)

5. Lesson Plan and Sample Materials for a Required Small Group Activity

LESSON PLAN: MEDIA UNIT - REQUIRED SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

RADIO COVINGHAM* SIMULATION

SESSION I. Introduction to the simulation

A. Interviews:

1. Listen to a short taped interview.
   Discuss & point out weaknesses (i.e., Y/N questions are not good).
2. Look at the extract from "Station Manager's Memo".
   Discuss his hints for good interviews.
3. Class/tutor Interview:
   The students will prepare a few questions to interview the tutor on a given topic. Suggest question frames like:
   "What do you think about ..."
   Interview the tutor and discuss results (may tape this if time).

B. Script Writing:

1. Listen to a few snatches of BBC news (students have scripts).
   Discuss how broadcasters create emphasis (stress and pauses).

   Have students practice reading the script to each other (pairs).
2. Compare a short transcript from a news broadcast with a newspaper story on the same subject. Point out the differences in language (see notes in T. Guide, pp. 3-4).
3. Station Manager's Memo

   Tell the students that before the next session they will receive a memo from the station manager (put in their mail boxes). They should read this carefully and bring any questions to the next session.

SESSION II. Begin Simulation

1. Review memo and give directions per handout and T. Guide p. 5. Give broadcast time and stress they must be ready at that time!
2. Get organized: assign/elect a producer and divide group into teams: handouts, letters and news items (samples follow).

   Give out materials to teams (only one news item).

SESSION III. Further Preparation

1. Continue to give out news items at regular intervals.
2. Students may have a practice broadcast - using stop watch and interviews.

SESSION IV. Final Preparation, Broadcast and Discussion

1. Final preparation and final news item.
2. Broadcast (exactly 10 minutes - taped).
3. Discussion and Playback: comments by students about their experience.

* Published by Inner London Education Authority

What it's about

You produce and broadcast a ten minute programme on Radio Covingham called *News and Views at 7.* You'll find most of the information about how to do it in the Station Manager's Memo. Read it very carefully. When it starts you'll get a pile of listeners' letters and handouts. These came in the morning mail. But the news items will come in one by one, gradually, right up to the time you go on the air. The Controller will brief you, and tell you the exact time you go on the air.

What you can do, and what you can't do

You can rewrite the material, but you can't invent news.

You can interview members of your own team in various roles, say as someone who wrote a letter, or is connected with a handout or the news items,but only in connection with the material.

You can, if you have a tape recorder, use it to see what an item sounds like, but you cannot use taped inserts in the broadcast itself. The broadcast itself should be recorded on tape, but it must be completely live, with no pre-recordings fed into it.

If you have time you can have a rehearsal, but this will not stop news flowing in.

Advice

Ten minutes is longer than you think! So aim for at least 2 interviews, preferably 3 or 4, and possibly 5 or 6.

Before the simulation begins, decide on how you are going to handle the material – perhaps with three groups dealing with letters, handouts and news.

If you are the producer, don't get bogged down in individual items, particularly if you have a large team. Make sure that someone is in charge of the timing – perhaps using hand signals for slowing down or speeding up, or putting up fingers to show the number of seconds or minutes remaining.

Before you begin, decide on the general shape of the programme. Should news be bunched together at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end, or should it be scattered throughout the programme? Will you have news headlines at the beginning? Will you have news headlines at the end? Will you have a special section or spot on a particular subject – such as entertainment, business and industry, etc? But you'll have to wait until you get the materials to decide the subjects. And remember the programme must contain 'views' – this means you can comment on items.

If you've finished your particular job then don't just sit around – ask the producer what else you can do.

PLEASE DON'T WRITE ON THE MATERIALS. THEY WILL BE NEEDED AGAIN.

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Nine Graded Simulations
No. 3 Radio Covingham

RAGLEY HARDWARE ENTERPRISES LTD
Established 1890
TASKWELL ROAD, LONDON W.17
TELEPHONE: 01-246 8021

NEWS HANDOUT

HERE'S SOME GOOD NEWS FOR ALL HOUSEWIVES LIVING IN Covingham AND DISTRICT.

Ragley Hardware Enterprises proudly announce the arrival of the new Ragley Tight-Grip Pans in leading stores in the city. They are a breakthrough in kitchen equipment. The handle of each pan is so designed that it can be held easily in one hand.

Ragley Tight-Grip pans are available in a variety of sizes, and there is a choice of three attractive colours ranging from Autumn Brown to Pony Tan.

REMEMBER. RAGLEY TIGHT-GRIP PANS ARE THE LATEST THING FOR THE KITCHEN! GO TO YOUR LOCAL STORES AND BUY THEM NOW.

NOTE:

For further information please contact Mr. S.L. Lever, Press Relations Officer, Ragley Hardware Enterprises Ltd., Taskwell Road, London W.17 or telephone 01.246.8021.

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"SAMPLE" NEWS ITEM FOR RADIO SIMULATION

Davis, Haswell POISON

Police cars went through the streets of Haswell this morning. The cars had loud speakers. The loud speakers were used to give a message to the people of Haswell. The message asked the people of Haswell to be on the lookout for any small green bottles. The people of Haswell were told that the bottles contained poison.

The police message said that the bottles had been dumped on a rubbish tip in Durton Road. The people of Haswell were asked to warn their children not to play with any of these bottles or open them. The bottles should be handed in to the police. The police cars went through Haswell giving this message to the people so as to warn them of the danger of poison.

SENT 1350 LHU

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11 Linton Lane
Cantonley

Dear Sir,

I like "News and Views at 7", but why must you report so many of the unpleasant things of life? Why do we have to hear about murders, robberies and accidents?

Please keep these things off your news and views, and let us hear about the pleasant and good things that are happening.

Yours faithfully

Phyllis Carpenter

Nine Graded Simulations
No.3 Radio Covingham

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A POSTSCRIPT

Alan Waters

Much of the foregoing course design is experimental and innovative. This is particularly true of the feedback system. In this postscript, some of the difficulties involved in putting such a system into practice are discussed. Essentially, they are those of creating a structure broad and flexible enough to accommodate the conflicting expectations of two very different views of the educational process, and the nature and role of feedback in particular.

The students, on one hand, appeared accustomed to a feedback model consisting of the teacher formulating directives to them on the basis of his unshared evaluation of their errors - with scant regard to their original likelihood of success, preferred learning strategies, or innate organisational abilities. In short, undifferentiated one-way traffic, aimed at steering everyone by the same route to the same goal.

On the other hand, the course writers envisaged a system whereby, in as humanely efficient a way as possible, the teacher provided a combination of "explicit" and "interaction" feedback (pp. 14-15), thus guiding the learner to appropriate material from the wide variety available in exercise banks such as those of the Optional Individualised Activities (OIA).

Unfortunately, however, the hope expressed in the original design (pp. 12-13) - that a superordinate teacher-controlled framework, with numerous subsystems in which student choice and initiative were optimalised, would resolve the differences - proved, in the light of experience, to be too optimistic. Difficulties in monitoring performance, and thus establishing the conditions for feedback, quickly developed into the most persistently worrying aspect of the course's implementation.

The design of the course is such that, without proper feedback, the learner quickly becomes disoriented. The traditional mainstay of course organisation - the preordination of the content and sequence of teaching materials - is absent. Instead, the feedback system, like a complex set of antennae, must detect actual need, and provide guidance accordingly. Without such counselling, however, the learner can wander aimlessly through a jungle of activities, negating the whole point of the course.

What were the principal causes of such a breakdown?

1 A too exact and crowded timetable was a major factor. In the first Unit, feedback was required far too soon (after the Small Group Activity). It was essential as input for work in later parts of the unit, but it could not be formulated from such a short contact with the students.

There is a case here for devoting most of the first week to activities which each have a clear, consolidatory feedback component, so that a gradual profile of each student's needs is built up, to be translated into remedial action in the following and subsequent weeks, and to be refined in the light of data emerging later. At the same time, students accustomed to a different system will need time to have matters explained, and (hopefully) to be won over. Throughout the course there is a need for the timetable to have adequate space and flexibility for teachers to orient students to the feedback system, as well as to the nature of the actual feedback. The prime target for pruning in order to gain such essential time would be the OIA component, despite its being so dependent on clear and accurate feedback. There is something of an imbalance in the present allocation of 8 hours a week for this component, and none specifically for establishing and giving feedback.

One must guard against the dangers of overkill in the area of individualising choice, especially at the expense of proper counselling in capitalising on such choices. Shopping in a supermarket is valueless unless one accepts the implications of particular choices, and is prepared to follow their consequences through. Furthermore, account has to be taken of the probability that the needs will change with subsequent visits.

2 The second major problem was that the "interaction" feedback system proved unworkable. It will have been noted (p. 14 f.) that in this system students were expected to keep a journal, writing down specific linguistic and communicative difficulties. These were then to be commented on by the teachers, and, in turn, by the students themselves. At the same time, both teacher and student were expected to interpret their jottings in terms of appropriate exercises from the OIA component.

In the majority of cases, the students did not keep such journals. This was partly a result of insufficient opportunity for all the teachers to become versed in the philosophy and techniques of such a system.

It was also partly a problem of lack of time to record and check on so many details. In the main, however, the task seemed to be beyond the students' capabilities, or just did not appear sufficiently relevant to them. Indeed, the skills of self-analysis and self-expression called upon in successfully writing such a journal are very great (especially in the L2 - in which it certainly had to be, if most of our teachers were going to make any sense of it). It is one thing to make an error, another to be aware of it, and yet another to explain one's awareness. It is more than all these to make profitable use of such awareness.

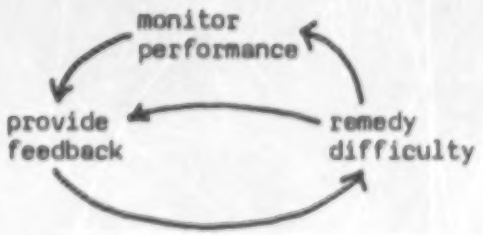
Putting such a system on a viable basis requires, as a minimum, introducing students to the importance of and the methods involved in keeping such a record. Even then, however, such a diary, no matter how conscientiously kept, tends to become a rather boring, depressing catalogue of daily defeats and frustrations divorced physically - and probably psychologically - from the immediate language learning and communicative needs of the student.

Alternative forms of "interaction" feedback that could be used are the criticisms and encouragements of the student's peers; devising exercises to incorporate a very closely related feedback section; and the development of a tutorial system for in-depth discussion of problem areas.

3 A third difficulty arose at the interface between the formulation of feedback recommendations and their interpretation in terms of exercises from the OIA component. More paths into these materials are needed in order to accommodate the very wide variety of learner's needs and interests. The present information comprising SKILL, TITLE, LEVEL and GOAL (pp. 18-19) is neither enough, nor necessarily the kind most easily grasped by the learner.

What is implied in terms of degrees of language learning or communicative difficulty by the three LEVELS needs explaining in terms significant to the student. A readily accessible overview of the sub-theme and the place of each TITLE in it would also help. Much more specific detail needs passing on about how and what each exercise practises. In their original form, the exercises were packaged in large manilla envelopes. Although practical and cheap, this method gives an apparent sameness to the items that should be avoided. Learning patterns, sequences and webs need working out not just in

each unit, but across the complete range of course materials. In fact, there seems no reason why learner needs could not be fed into one of the small, "domestic" computers becoming increasingly available. This machine could be programmed with details of exercises of the OIA type, and routes through a variety of materials plotted in response to the input. Feedback is one section of a cycle which includes monitoring performance and remedying difficulty (see below):



A feedback cycle

Perhaps more of the teacher's energy is spent on establishing networks between the feedback and remedial stages than any other aspect of the process. A computer-assisted system could free the teacher for less mechanical tasks.

Even if one adopts remedies like the above, however, there are still likely to be other extraneous constraints mitigating against a smoothly functioning feedback system. Two factors - neither of which the course designers can have been expected to foresee the implications of - severely lessened motivation, and therefore increased the difficulty of establishing adequate feedback. The first was that the Lancaster component of the course was non-credit, and so students constantly felt cheated of their just reward in terms of their University degree, no matter how well or hard they performed. The second was the fast month of Ramadan, in its British-summer version, with 14-16 hours of daylight exerting a considerable toll on the students' stamina. We have not been able to change the former, and the most innovative course designer can do little else than sit and wait out the latter.